Press release

UK and US meet to make positive progress on data and tech

UK Digital Secretary Michelle Donelan met with US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo to discuss digital priorities

From:
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, and The Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP
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- New annual dialogue established as part of landmark tech partnership
- UK and US make significant progress towards a data adequacy agreement to benefit businesses and boost digital trade

Today UK Digital Secretary Michelle Donelan and US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo paved the way for a new data adequacy agreement in the coming weeks as they met to discuss a range of digital issues.

Currently organisations transferring personal data from the UK to the US have to use costly and time-consuming transfer tools, such as international data transfer agreements, which slow down data flows and create administrative burdens.

Data adequacy agreements allow personal data to be transferred freely from the UK to countries with high protection standards. New deals with other countries will unlock more growth and allow us to share crucial information, such as life-saving research and manufacturing details across our borders.

Reducing barriers to data flows makes it easier for businesses to trade and grow in international markets and brings benefits for consumers such as better access to higher-quality products and lower prices. Exports of British data-enabled services to the US, like finance and computer services, were estimated to be worth more than £69 billion in 2020 and are set to grow once expensive and time-consuming transfer mechanisms are removed.

The UK Digital Secretary and US Secretary of Commerce discussed the UK's adequacy assessment of the new US Data Privacy Framework, a framework to securely send UK data to organisations in America. They discussed some of the robust protections that will be in place for UK data under a potential agreement and agreed to conclude the adequacy work in the weeks ahead.

The Digital Secretary welcomed the publication of the Executive Order, signed by President Biden this afternoon, which strengthens the safeguards and establishes new redress routes for UK data processed by US authorities.

The ministers also committed to a new official dialogue, led by DCMS and FCDO and the US Departments of Commerce and State, to build on the landmark tech agreement between the two countries announced in 2021. The annual meeting will bring together senior officials from across both governments to progress shared tech priorities and deliver joint initiatives. The first meeting will focus on data, critical and emerging technologies, and resilient digital infrastructure.

UK Digital Secretary Michelle Donelan said:

> The United States shares our democratic values, digital priorities and commitment to high standards of data privacy.
>
> Data and tech are creating new opportunities for growth and connection between our two countries, including between our world-leading tech industries.
>
> I look forward to working together to bring these benefits to people on both sides of the Atlantic.

US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo said:

> Today's announcement affirms our shared commitment to promoting responsible innovation and digital policies, while also supporting growth and opportunity. This partnership reflects our deepening cooperation on bilateral data and tech issues, as well as our commitment to closer engagement and global leadership as these issues continue to evolve. I look forward to working closely with Secretary Donelan as we continue looking for ways to balance the needs of privacy and responsible data use while removing barriers for critical business needs.

Following their meeting, the Digital Secretary and Secretary of Commerce met with senior leaders from industry, academia, and civil society - including Meta, IBM and the London Stock Exchange - who welcomed the positive progress between the UK and US.

Julian David, CEO of techUK, said on today's announcement:

> Today's progress on UK-US data sharing will be welcomed by businesses across the UK. An agreement will provide business with the legal certainty and confidence needed to access new markets and create opportunities for innovation. This will enable the UK to leverage its world-leading industries such as financial services and tech to drive wider economic growth on all sides of the Atlantic.

Duncan Edwards, CEO BritishAmerican Business, said:

> Business has been clear that it needs an open, safe and legally secure environment for transatlantic data flows. A new, bilateral agreement should provide businesses with more certainty to make data-related investment decisions and remove legal uncertainty and burdensome administration from their day-to-day business activities. Further UK-US cooperation in this area is a welcome step towards strengthening the transatlantic partnership and will help create a more consistent set of international data transfer rules.

Vivienne Artz OBE, Chair of the Data Committee, International Regulatory Strategy Group, said:

> In a world fragmented by increasing data localisation measures, it is all the more important to continue to build meaningful, outcome focussed data transfer bridges, to support business and individual engagement in our inter-connected and global world. A UK-US data partnership is a fundamental building block supporting the strong economic and social ties between these two nations.

Zahra Bahrololoumi, CEO Salesforce UK and Ireland, said:

> As our reliance on digital tools and services grow, cross-border data flows will be key to driving productivity and economic growth. At Salesforce we welcome today's commitment to strengthening the trusted exchange of information, ideas and technologies. Removing barriers and complexity of data management will spur innovation and improve productivity, helping businesses to better serve their customers, reduce costs and create new opportunities in the digital economy. It also puts the UK in a strong position to build on its status as a global hub for the free and responsible flow of data.

This summer the UK announced its first independent adequacy decision in principle with the Republic of Korea, one of Britain's priority countries for a data deal after leaving the EU. Data enabled service exports to the UK's top six priority partners (Australia, Colombia, Dubai International Finance Centre, Republic of Korea, Singapore and the USA) are already worth more than £80 billion.

Notes to Editors:

- The full statement from the UK and the United States.
- An explanatory note on UK-US data adequacy.
- The commitment to championing international data flows is part of the UK's National Data Strategy.

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